

Worm eats its way into McDonald's MP3 player promotion

Japanese fast-food promotion gives away virus-laden prize that affects computers running Windows

By Peter Sayer, IDG News Service
October 16, 2006

McDonald's Holdings Co. (Japan) Ltd., the Japanese subsidiary of the U.S. fast-food chain, warned prize winners about the infected players Friday. It offered a Web link to software provided by Trend Micro Inc. that can remove the worm from infected computers, and invited winners to return their MP3 players for a free replacement.

The worm spreads from the MP3 player to other removable drives on computers running Microsoft Corp.'s Windows operating system, and attempts to disable some anti-virus applications. If it finds the QQ Instant Messenger application running, it attempts to steal account login information and other chat details, and transmit them by e-mail. The QQ Instant Messenger service is popular in China and South Africa.

McDonald's ran the MP3 player promotion from Aug. 4 to Aug. 31, and sent the prizes to 10,000 winners in late September, according to its Japanese Web site.

Trend Micro first received samples of the worm on Sept. 29, according to its Web site. It rates the risk of damage to a computer infected by the worm as high, but the overall risk as low, given the small number of infections reported so far.

(Martyn Williams, in Tokyo, contributed to this report.)